

SETTLEMENT FUNDS WILL REDUCE SCHOOL BUS POLLUTANTS

It isn't unusual for states to receive funds for environmental projects when the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reaches a settlement with a major corporation. That was the case when EPA and Dominion Resources (VEPCO) hammered out an agreement to install pollution controls on power plants in Virginia and West Virginia. Northeastern states received funds for environmental projects; Maryland's share is \$600,000.

We are putting the money to good use. We are working with school districts in Anne Arundel, Montgomery and Prince George's counties to reduce harmful emissions from the school buses that transport students to school and home again.

In Anne Arundel County, \$90,000 will be used to purchase and install oxidation catalysts on 58 school buses.

In Montgomery County, \$300,000 will be used to equip 125 buses with pollution reducing equipment and to purchase 416,000 gallons of ultra-low-sulfur diesel fuel (ULSD). Settlement funds will pay the difference between the cost of regular diesel and the cleaner burning ULSD.

And in Prince George's County, over \$200,000 will be used to purchase and install diesel oxidation catalysts on 81 school buses.

Retrofitting older diesel engines with diesel oxidation catalysts cuts particulate matter by 20 percent, carbon monoxide by 40 percent and volatile organic compounds by 50 percent. The use of the ULSD fuel will also reduce air toxics emissions, including oxides of sulfur (SO₂, SO₄ by 90 percent), particulate matter (by 9 percent), carbon monoxide (7 percent) and volatile organic compounds (24 percent).

As Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr. noted when he announced the projects, this small investment will have an on-going, positive impact on the quality of air students breathe when they are on the buses. What's more, we improve the overall air quality in the associated communities.

Earlier this year, the Maryland departments of Environment and Transportation and the EPA announced that they were funding 1.7 million gallons of ULSD fuel for Maryland Transit Administration buses serving East Baltimore communities. The additional funds from the VEPCO settlement will further our efforts to clean the air.